

Upgrading a Vibroplex Double Key



Alternative Cable Configuration

By W4HDM

I like the idea of a 2 in one key for CW , but dreaded having two more cables to clutter the desk. So, while waiting for the new key to arrive I made up a cable using a computer USB cable by splitting the end to accommodate two plugs.

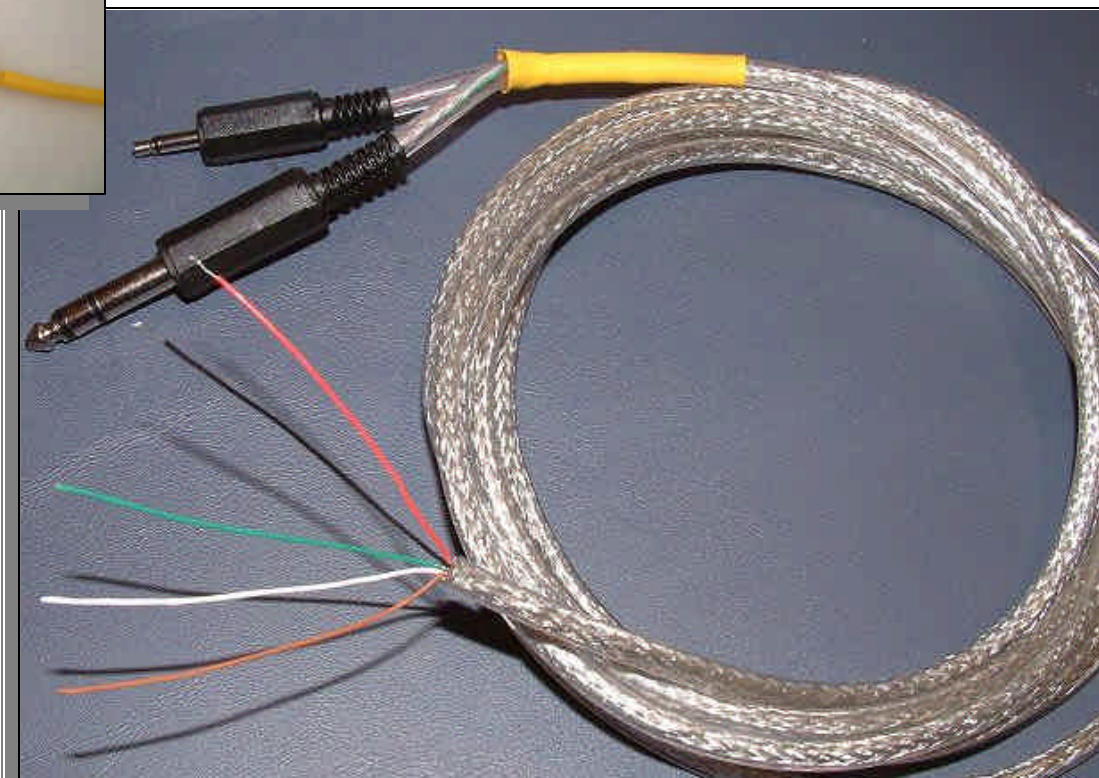


Note: There are only 5 wires, it looks like more due to shadows.

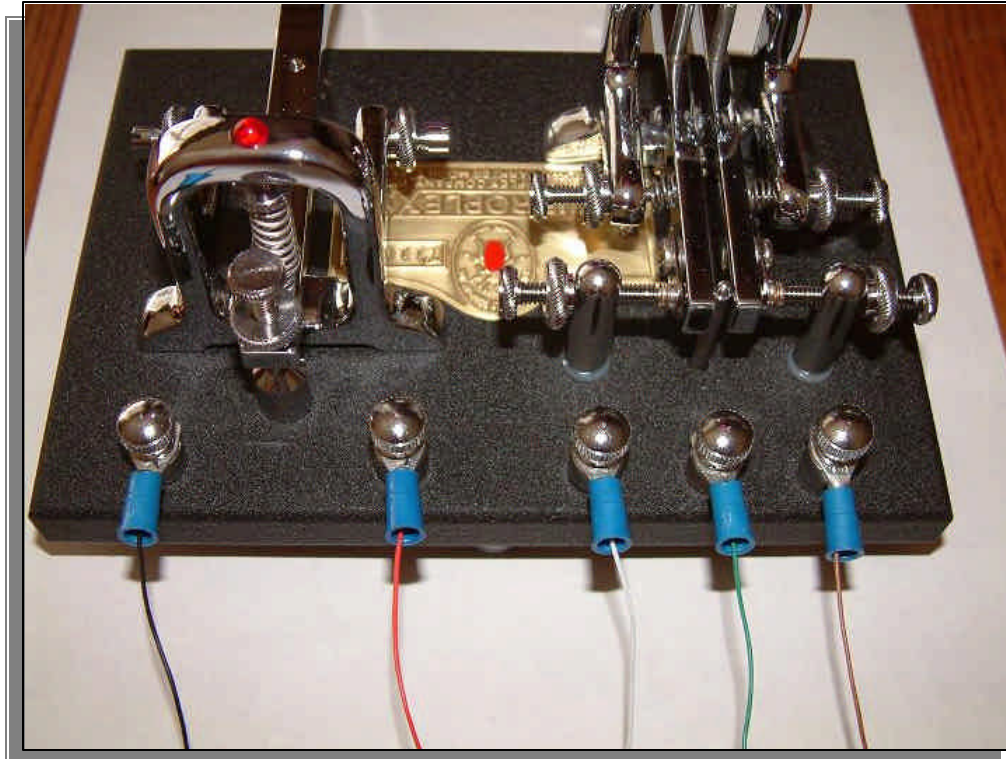
The original cable had 5 wires in it ...perfect ... 2 for the straight key, 3 for the iambic.

This cable (before I cut the connectors off) had lights in the connectors to show activity on the line.

Hmm, could I utilize this to make the lights blink with the sending? I will look into that latter.

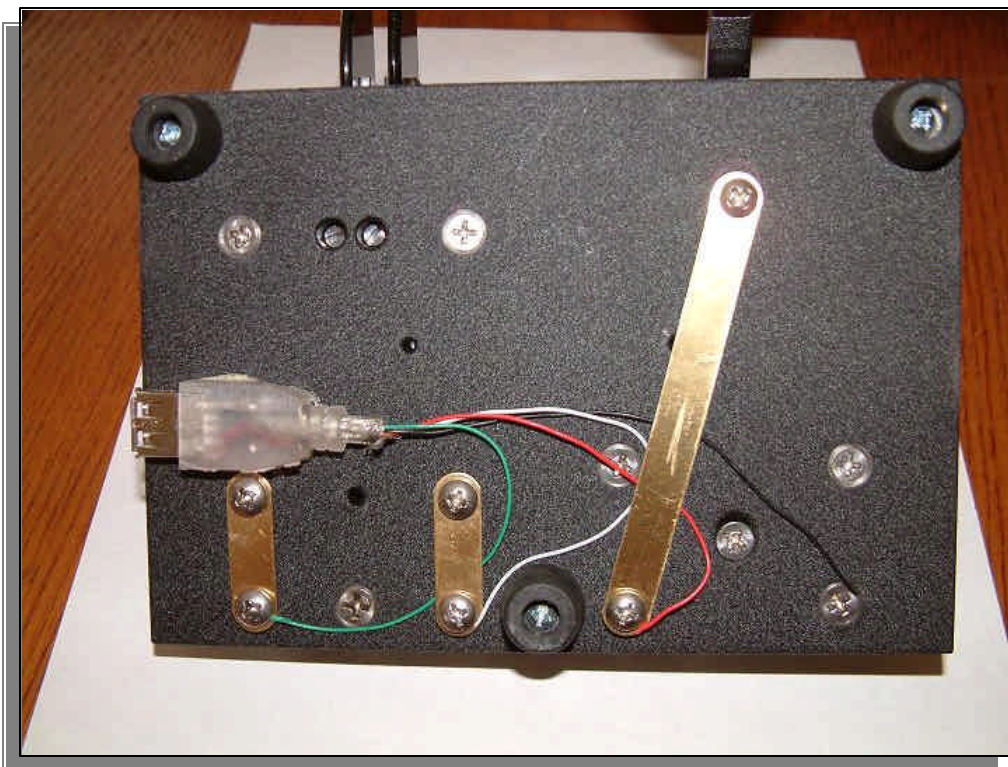


The end result was disappointing. The wires hanging from the key, were to me, unsightly.



Also if I wanted the cool "blinky" light while keying, I would need to retain the ends, so back to the store to purchase another USB cable.

OK, with the new cable in hand, it's back to the work bench. this time I only cut the female end off, leaving about 8 inches to work with. I set up the long end as before with the phono plugs, and the male connector on the opposite end.



First, I stripped back the outer protective coating and the shielding, exposing the 5 wires. Then, I used Gorilla glue to secure it to the base of the key. Once it dried, I connected the wires to the appropriate screws that retain the binding post to the top.

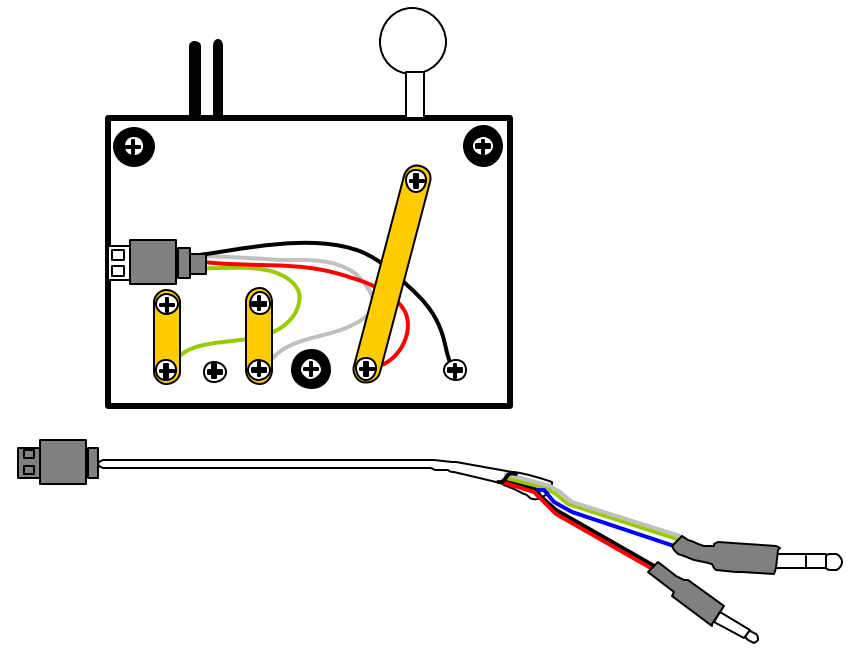
If you notice the picture, there are only 4 wires. Well that is where the lights came init turns out the way the connectors were wired, one wire did not have continuity, through the plug, and to make matters worse when the key was activated it would cause connection of other wires within the plug. Disaster! The iambic side would only work on one side and the straight key tried to act as an iambic, but rather than repeat when held down it would sound once and stop.

So, rather than buy a new cable I used one that I had laying around with just the male end on it. And ditched the light idea all together. This cable only had 4 wires so at the phono plug end I had to combine the two grounds No problem.

The final product is a nice neat installation without multiple cables running across the desk. Awesome!



This is a very easy project and could be utilized with other Vibroplex models as well. The USB works great for the double keyer, but a stereo jack or RCA may be the better solution for the single keys.



- DIT
- DAH
- Ground
- Ground
- Positive

